

Heavenward Bound

Times of Injustice

Ecc. 10:5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun, like an error which goes forth from the ruler-- 6 folly is set in many exalted places while rich men sit in humble places. 7 I have seen slaves [riding] on horses and princes walking like slaves on the land.

Ecc. 8:14 There is futility which is done on the earth, that is, there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the wicked. On the other hand, there are evil men to whom it happens according to the deeds of the righteous. I say that this too is futility.

Ecc. 7:15 I have seen everything during my lifetime of futility; there is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness and there is a wicked man who prolongs [his life] in his wickedness.

Ecc. 5:8 If you see oppression of the poor and denial of justice and righteousness in the province, do not be shocked at the sight; for one official watches over another official, and there are higher officials over them. 9 After all, a king who cultivates the field is an advantage to the land.

Ecc. 3:16 Furthermore, I have seen under the sun
[that] in the place of justice there is wickedness
and in the place of righteousness there is
wickedness... 1 Then I looked again at all the acts
of oppression which were being done under the
sun. And behold [I saw] the tears of the
oppressed and [that] they had no one to comfort
[them;] and on the side of their oppressors was
power, but they had no one to comfort [them.] 2
So I congratulated the dead who are already dead
more than the living who are still living.

Ecc. 1:15 What is crooked cannot
be straightened and what is lacking
cannot be counted.

Grace and mercy during
times of injustice

Road map of the lesson

Jonah's struggle
with revenge and
righteousness

Lessons from
Jesus on giving /
receiving mercy

General questions
to consider
regarding mercy

Jonah's struggle with revenge and righteousness

God instructs Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against them.

1:1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying, 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me.

Jonah's struggle with revenge and righteousness

God instructs Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against them.

Jonah's response...

1:3 But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

1:4 The LORD hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up. 5 Then the sailors became afraid and every man cried to his god, and they threw the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten [it] for them. But Jonah had gone below into the hold of the ship, lain down and fallen sound asleep.

Jonah's struggle with revenge and righteousness

God instructs Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against them.

Jonah's response...

God instructs Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against them, again.

3:1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you." 3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days' walk. 4 Then Jonah began to go through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown."

Jonah's struggle with revenge and righteousness

God instructs Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against them.

Jonah's response...

God instructs Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against them, again.

Jonah's response...

4:1 But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry... 3 "Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life." 4 The LORD said, "Do you have good reason to be angry?" 5 Then Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it. There he made a shelter for himself and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen in the city...the sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he became faint and begged with [all] his soul to die, saying, "Death is better to me than life." 9 Then God said to Jonah, "Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?" And he said, "I have good reason to be angry, even to death."

Jonah's struggle with revenge and righteousness blinded him to...

how his actions have negatively affected everyone around him.

how similar he was to those he deemed to be his enemies.

how merciful God had been towards him this entire time.

the innocent people God was wanting to save.

There were some important lessons that
Jonah needed to learn...

and understand the
justice and mercy of
God.

that God wanted to save
him from himself not
from his circumstance.

that God didn't just want
to save him, He wants to
save everyone, his
enemies included.

being saved means
becoming like God. So,
extending grace to those
who have hurt you.

What do you desire when you've
been unjust?

In our times of failure, times when
we fall or we aren't who we
should've been, we NEVER want
revenge, and seldom do we want
justice. What we seek is mercy.

Lessons from Jesus on giving and receiving mercy

Remember your
identity

Matthew 5:7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. 8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. 10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Lessons from Jesus on giving and receiving mercy

Remember your identity

See yourself and others w/ the Word

Matthew 6:14 “For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 “But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions....7:12 “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Lessons from Jesus on giving and receiving mercy

Remember your
identity

See yourself and
others w/ the Word

We owe God more
than anyone us

Matthew 18:32 “Then summoning him, his lord said to him, ‘You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 ‘Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?’

Lessons from Jesus on giving and receiving mercy

Remember your identity

See yourself and others w/ the Word

We owe God more than anyone us

God desires to save His oppressors

Luke 23:34 But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”

And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.

Acts 7:60 Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!” Having said this, he fell asleep.

General questions to consider regarding mercy

1. Who/what am I really fighting against?
2. What pictures am I tempted to paint over a general group of people? Does that affect the way I view their justice-deservedness?
3. The government, and ultimately God need to be dispensers of justice and wrath. The government isn't going to dispense mercy/grace. If I don't do it then who will?

General questions to consider regarding mercy

4. When is it that I seek for justice on a certain issue?
5. What's informing my image and desire for justice? Is it my culture (race, the media, politics etc.) or is it the Gospel?
6. What am I doing to change the relationship between revenge, justice, and mercy?
7. What is it that I want regarding justice and mercy? Has it ever existed? Is it possible that what I'm longing for isn't here?

“We can be so quiet with our preaching and so indistinct in our conduct that people don't even notice it. When that's the case there's not much progress made as a rule. We don't seek to stir up strife and opposition intentionally, but we do preach the truth aggressively and we conduct ourselves distinctly. If we are what we ought to be; to be looked down on and to be viewed as troublemakers in this society where we are because of our distinctiveness. I wonder sometimes if our lack of growth is not due to the fact that we blended into the culture too clearly, too easily, we're not seen as being different.”